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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2047  
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JAN 0474  
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY 4907  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY 1775

UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 000003

SIPDIS

LA PAZ FOR A/DCM  
DOJ FOR OPDAT (ROBERT LIPMAN)

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TAGS: [KIPR](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [DR](#)  
SUBJECT: IPR WORKSHOP LEADS TO RESULTS

11. Summary: On December 10-11, Embassy Santo Domingo hosted an intellectual property rights (IPR) workshop that was well attended by Dominican government officials as well as representatives from the private sector, including Dominican music and film artists who spoke of the importance of IPR in their industries. Led by the Department of Justice,s Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (DOJ/OPDAT), the workshop focused on strengthening practical skills involved in investigating IPR crimes, such as conducting searches and interviewing suspects. This training was a continuation of an earlier workshop that was held in April 2007 where DOJ assisted Dominican law enforcement officials to develop a manual on investigating and prosecuting IPR crimes. DOJ is interested in organizing a follow-on program for Dominican judges in 2009. As a direct result of the workshop, the Attorney General,s office has seized pirated software and is speaking out on the need to combat piracy. End Summary.

12. The Embassy organized the workshop in coordination with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce Office of Foreign Trade (DICOEX), as part of our trade capacity building assistance under CAFTA-DR. Although the DR strengthened its IPR laws to meet its obligations under the treaty, enforcement continues to be weak as noted in the Special 301 report where the DR is included on the watch list. Therefore, Post was pleased to see an impressive turnout at the workshop of a wide array of Dominican government officials from the Chief of Police who spoke at the opening, to judges, prosecutors, and members of the police responsible for IPR crimes. In addition, representatives from the private sector enthusiastically supported the workshop and contributed to the discussions of how to address the problem of piracy in the DR.

13. The attendance of several prominent Dominican artists, who were brought in as surprise guests, including well know meringue stars Rubby Perez and Sergio Vargas and actor/film producer Carlos Alfredo Fatule, was the highlight of the workshop. Participants listened aptly as the artists spoke about how piracy has affected them personally and how it is hurting Dominican culture. The artists and representatives from the Dominican Society of Record Producers expressed interest in working with the Embassy and Dominican officials to do whatever they can to increase awareness of the importance of protecting IPR.

14. In addition to providing much needed training for law enforcement professionals, the workshop also served as an import tool to bring together Dominican government officials that do not often communicate let alone coordinate with one another. DOJ helped participants from the police and prosecutors office draft an action plan to target street piracy in a few upper middle class neighborhoods as a

starting point. There is evidence that the plan is already being implemented as the media reported on December 30 that the District Attorney,s Office for the National District, which includes Santo Domingo, confiscated pirated software in several areas throughout the city. The Coordinator of the IPR Office, Johnny Nunez Arroyo, who participated in the workshop, told the media that piracy is a fundamental problem and hurts the image of the country. An Embassy officer who works closely with the police noted that it is encouraging to see the Dominicans developing a strategy instead of just shooting from the hip. Embassy officers will work with our contacts in the government to urge implementation of the plan and continued attention to IPR crimes.

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